BOOK REVIEWS

FUNDAMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS IN ANESTHESIA. By Charles L. Burstein, M.D., Chief, Department of Anesthesiology, Hospital for Special Surgery, Veterans Administration Hospital, N. Y. The Macmillan Company, New York, 1949. $4.00.

This book is well titled. It contains information on pharmacology, physiology and physiopathology as related to clinical anesthesia with which everyone administering anesthetics should be familiar.

Under the heading of Circulatory Disturbances, shock, celiac plexus reflex, carotid sinus reflex, cardiac arrhythmias and the changes of blood pressure under spinal anesthesia are each briefly explained and a method to avoid these complications or treat them when they do occur is suggested.

The book is clear, concise and fundamentally sound and can be recommended to everyone interested in anesthesiology.

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THE STORY OF MEDICINE. By Joseph Garland, M.D., Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1949. $2.75.

Most books dealing with the history of medicine were written primarily by professional historians for the student of history and therefore ordinarily are not within the reading sphere of the average man. Besides, often they are weighty tomes of the reference type not to be read just casually. Joseph Garland, pediatrician and editor of the *New England Journal of Medicine*, evidently felt the need for something more easily read but still adequately informative and sufficiently exciting to hold the reader. And so he has told the great story of the development of medicine in a conversational style all of his own that is most attractive and certainly sufficiently exciting to invite the reader to peruse the book more than once. I did so, and I enjoyed the second reading even more than the first although your reviewer flatters himself to be thoroughly conversant with the history of medicine.

The real value of Garland's book is not only that it can be read with pleasure by anybody but that it also is the kind of history that the medical student as well as the busy practitioner can read with considerable profit. Neither students nor practitioners ordinarily have the time, or make the time, or have the inclination to delve into the learned treatises written by our outstanding historians. The result has been that most practitioners of medicine have forgotten much, if not all, of what has made medicine great through the centuries. Now here is a chance to refresh one's memory with the reading of the exciting events that led up to the shaping of modern medicine without having to struggle with involved sentences and the endless references of the larger works on the subject.

You will enjoy reading about the talkative inquisitive men who build up great theories on the basis of little fact and how they attempted to understand something beyond the boundaries of their knowledge, just as some of our supposed wisdom of the present will some time be proved false and must be replaced. And therewith the author leads you from ancient times through the thinking of the Greek and Roman medical men on to the medicine of the Moslem Empire and into the Christian era. He tells you what transpired at the medieval universities where after three years of logic the student spent from five to seven years to make himself proficient in the Art of Healing. He tells of the days of the great plagues and the suffering they brought to the mankind of that day. He tells you of the days of the rebirth of intellectual curiosity in men's minds that came with the dawning of the Renaissance and that ultimately brought forth the great men of Padua, Bologna and Paris and such mental giants as Harvey and Vesalius. And so he unfolds the story of medicine by telling of great men and lesser men, modest men and vain men, and how they came to know about disease.

It would go too far to tell here about all there is in this book of Garland's. Besides, telling all of it here would take away from the joy of discovering the treasures of information crammed into the few hundred pages of this history of medicine. You will enjoy reading Garland's tale after a hard day's work. It will stimulate your thinking and will relax you. It will make you feel proud of your profession. By all means read this book, Doctor, and then tell your patients about it. They, too, will enjoy reading it and no doubt will come to understand better why medical practitioners through the ages have devoted their lives to bettering the health and happiness of mankind.

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MEDICAL ETYMOLOGY—The History and Derivation of Medical Terms for Students of Medicine, Dentistry, and Nursing. By O. H. Perry Pepper, M.D., Professor of Medicine, University of Pennsylvania. W. B. Saunders Company, Philadelphia, 1949. $5.50.

This small volume, the first comprehensive work on medical etymology, will prove of great interest to any philologist, whether or not he is a doctor. For Dr. Pepper has done a stimulating and often witty—if not always thorough—job of classifying and tracing the derivation of some 4,000 medical terms. Because the book was planned principally for the use of the medical or dental students, it is divided into an introduction and separate sections for preclinical subjects, clinical subjects and dentistry. Any medical reader, however, will find these divisions handy for reference. The introduction, with its discussions of the background of medical terminology, prefixes, suffixes, compounds and transliteration, eponyms and onomatopoetic words, is unusually pertinent and interesting.

This book should not be confused with a dictionary. Dr. Pepper often does not bother to define the terms he discusses. (When he does, he is apt to come up with such a definition as, "Odontalgia—a ten dollar word for toothache.") Instead, he devotes himself to a series of enthusiastic running comments on the history and derivation of these words. Readers will find these discussions strongly flavored with Dr. Pepper's lively personality—and his occasional prejudices and inconsistencies. For Dr. Pepper proves somewhat of a Don Quixote. He fences against the use of eponyms. While obviously fascinated with existing medical terms and their derivations, he finds many of them difficult and he advocates unusually free modification of them. He defines and traces the derivation of the names of all the larger branches of medicine except his own—internal medicine. However, he does derive diagnosis from the Greek, *dia*= apart, and *gnosis*=knowing. And he states: "The word physician is derived from the ancient Latin word physicus= physical philosopher." . . . "Doctor (L. doctor=a teacher) was the highest degree in medicine, law or theology given by the medieval universities. . . . Let these words suffice." Could it be that Dr. Pepper doesn't "*gno*" the derivation of "internist"?

Whether or not this volume will prove as valuable to medical and dental students as Dr. Pepper hopes, is debatable. (Is the knowledge of derivation of words really of any great help in recalling and associating them?) At any rate, it makes for provocative and enjoyable reading. The last word given in it is xerostomia, from the Greek *xeros*= dry and *stoma*=mouth. "This results," Dr. Pepper writes, "from several causes, including the reading of this book through to the end." The reviewer, for one, didn't find this so.